Calgary and Area RCSD
Youth to Adulthood Transitions Project

Considerations for the Phase 3 Project and its Evaluation

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Considerations for Key Functions/Areas of Focus for the Connector Role and Phase 3 Activities

This set of functions was developed based on the YTA transition knowledge base, and the identified needs and suggestions from the interviews. The intent was to balance higher level/more indirect system connecting and planning activities with some more direct, practical tasks that could build collaborative relationships as well as expertise and credibility for the role. It is acknowledged that all of the functions here are not feasible for a one FTE position, but the full list could be used in a stakeholder discussion of priorities. Functions could also be staged over time, with higher priority work beginning immediately and other activities brought on over time.

An important overarching activity for Phase 3 will be knowledge mobilization of the products of the work to date, including the Literature Review and Phase 2 Findings.

Function/Area of Focus	Sub-Area of Focus (in priority order)	Further Suggestions	Rationale/Comments
Education/ Training	• **Adult Services** – about transitions, developmental sensitivity, info sharing, trauma-informed care (TIC) • **Parents** – about transitions and the need to start early, about supports available, emotional aspects, need to let go, advocacy, self-care etc. • **Service Providers** – about transitions, starting earlier and extending later, TIC, the importance of context, integrated youth services (IYS) • **Planning multi**-stakeholder learning event(s)	Adult services – have core YTA services and WG members nominate targeted services Parents – identify most vulnerable parents of younger adolescents and offer supportive information. Service providers – work together on a common understanding summary document(s) that summarizes the relevant literature and circulate/present. Develop videos, webinars for delivery etc. Plan for in-person learning events; possible cross-training in key areas	Based on strong message in the interviews that receiving side (adult services) lack understanding of and responsiveness to the needs of transitioning youth
Coordination/ Connection of Existing Services	• Chair a **multi-agency Table** for high-needs youth facing transition-related barriers • **Assist agencies** in working together on behalf of the high-needs youth identified above • Provide **direct support** for some of the youth where needed in the form of case coordination and navigation	Develop relationships with key people in the core services. Develop criteria for referral Receive referrals, collect information from the involved agencies, suggest additional resources Hold regular Table meetings and brainstorm solutions, follow-up	Based on multiple mentions of the value of working directly on individual 'cases' as the best way to keep focus and build collaborative approaches, as well as

	• Maintain specific connections with IYS as this model is developed in Calgary & Area		need – providers suggested that these youth are known to everyone
Program Development and Evaluation* *(*more detail on evaluation below)*	• Co-develop **service charter/principles** that cross all types of transitions and types of youth with the core agencies and youth advisors; • Co-develop/select **common program tools** such as a transition readiness scale, a standard transition planning tool, outcome measures such as functioning (provider-rated) and quality of life (client-rated), youth empowerment scale, possibly Fidelity scales for best YTA practice with self-assessment processes etc. • Co-develop **cross-agency tools** such as service maps and/or service pathways • Co-design a **developmental evaluation process** with the core agencies and youth advisors • Offer agencies assistance with evaluation processes and measures • Recognition/celebration of best practices:	Principles can be drawn from the YTA literature such as the NICE guidelines may include developmentally oriented, client-centred/led, trauma-informed, empowerment-oriented, wholistic (attention to broad domains of practice), strengths-based, culturally safe, rights-based, early age of planning etc. Domains for an outcome tool or tools can be drawn from literature documenting youth values and the set of outcomes that are relevant to core providers as well as tools recommended by core members as useful. Other outcome measures to consider are self-efficacy, hope, loneliness/social connectedness, purpose. Initial assessment of ACE levels may also be of interest. Organize an annual peer-nominated award for best practice in youth transitions for either youth or adult services (include youth in the voting/selection process – focus on biggest changes related to YTA) or offer a certificate of YTA-friendly practices by all agencies adopting the charter or meeting a Fidelity standard	Based on identified needs for more learning and tools, dissatisfaction with current processes as well as the value of working together on concepts and principles for positive engagement and alignment toward best practices and engagement; also lots of willingness to do this Based on value of rewarding incremental change

Information and Resources Brokering	• Assemble a set of **resources and tools**, including common listing of services for youth, sets of related resources for youth, parents and providers • **Provide phone consultation to providers on resources** in and beyond the core services • Provide **phone consultation, support and referral for parents** where core agencies have identified that extra assistance may be needed	Use the resources identified in the lit review and gathered from the core services but vet them for utility and appropriateness with the multi-agency group, parents, and youth. Examples are the UK SCI resources, the Sask tech tools, the Ontario resource for parents etc. May need to develop simple summaries of key information for various audiences. Ultimately offer the service listings in an online database and update periodically	Based on the principle of using the best of what is already available and the need for continued learning and development
Outreach	• Identify youth with disabilities/vulnerabilities that are **not currently being served** and connect them to services	Unlikely to be feasible with one FTE	Included anyway because identified in the interviews as an important need
Youth and Parent Engagement (Overarches all functions above)	• Set up a small group of **Youth Advisors** made up of youth with disabilities and/or vulnerabilities from the core agencies including slightly older youth who have overcome transition barriers and collect their feedback on all of the above • Set up a small group of **Parent Advisors** made up of parents who have overcome transition barriers on behalf of their children and collect their feedback on all of the above	Ideally would ultimately develop some peer support activities (both youth and parent peers) connected to the functions above but that is also unlikely to be feasible with one FTE	Peer support included anyway because a strong message in this literature as well as broader health and human services literatures.
Sharing Policy-Level Learnings	• The many policy-level issues and opportunities identified in Phase 2 (both implications from the published literature and the input of interviewees) may be valuable at the provincial level for individual Ministries and across Ministry policy discussions.	Develop a plan for further development of policy messages, comparative policy analysis and sharing/discussions with policy-makers at the provincial level.	The ideas/suggestions for improvement at the level of provincial policy were many and varied. While there is a strong focus on action in Phase 3 at the regional level by RCSD partners/youth-serving agencies,

			there could also be additional and broader benefit to share findings/ opportunities across RCSDs and with provincial policy-makers.

Initial Ideas for a Design and Measurement Approaches for a Developmental Evaluation

By definition, a developmental evaluation unfolds as the intervention unfolds; one can start with a basic evaluation design and measures, but this is followed by frequent checks and revisions until what is collected and reported at the end may look very different from what was anticipated.

Some guidance from https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/developmental_evaluation follows:

Developmental Evaluation supports innovation development to guide adaptation to emergent and dynamic realities in complex environments. Innovations can take the form of new projects, programs, products, organizational changes, policy reforms, and system interventions. A complex system is characterized by a large number of interacting and interdependent elements in which there is no central control. Patterns of change emerge from rapid, real time interactions that generate learning, evolution, and development – if one is paying attention and knows how to observe and capture the important and emergent patterns. Complex environments for social interventions and innovations are those in which what to do to solve problems is uncertain and key stakeholders are in conflict about how to proceed (Patton 2010). The differences between traditional and developmental evaluation are summarized below (Patton 2006):

Traditional evaluation	Developmental evaluation
Purpose: Supports improvement, summative tests and accountability	**Purpose:** Supports development of innovation and adaptation in dynamic environments
Roles & relationships: Positioned as an outsider to assure independence and objectivity	**Roles & relationships:** Positioned as an internal team function integrated into the process of gathering and interpreting data, framing issues, surfacing and testing model developments
Accountability: Focused on external authorities and funders based on explicit and pre-ordinate criteria	**Accountability:** Centered on the innovators' values and commitment to make a difference
Options: Rigorously options-focused, traditional research and disciplinary standards of quality dominate	**Options:** Utilization focused: options are chosen in service to developmental use
Measurement: Measure performance and success against pre-determined goals and SMART outcomes	**Measurement:** Develops measures and tracking mechanisms quickly as outcomes emerge; measures can change during the evaluation as the process unfolds
Evaluation results: Detailed formal reports; validated best practices, generalizable across time and space. Can engender fear of failure	**Evaluation results:** Rapid, real time feedback; diverse, user-friendly forms of feedback. Evaluation aims to nurture learning
Complexity & uncertainty: Evaluator tries to control design implementation and the evaluation process	**Complexity & uncertainty:** Learning to respond to lack of control; staying in touch with what's unfolding and responding accordingly
Standards: Methodological competence and commitment to rigor, independence; credibility with external authorities and funders; analytical and critical thinking	**Standards:** Methodological flexibility eclecticism, and adaptability; systems thinking; creative and critical thinking balanced; high tolerance for ambiguity; open and agile; teamwork and people skills; able to facilitate rigorous evidence-based perspectives

Function/Area of Focus	Sub-Area of Focus (in priority order)	Further Suggestions Specific to Evaluation
Education/ Training	• **Adult Services** – about transitions, developmental sensitivity, info sharing, trauma-informed care (TIC) • **Parents** – about transitions and the need to start early, about supports available, emotional aspects, need to let go, advocacy, self-care etc. • **Service Providers** – about transitions, starting earlier and extending later, TIC, the importance of context, integrated youth services (IYS) • **Planning multi**-stakeholder learning event(s)	Systematically collect feedback on content and delivery of training specific to each group, refine training and the type of feedback collected at regular intervals based on prior feedback
Coordination/ Connection of Existing Services	• Chair a **multi-agency Table** for high-needs youth facing transition-related barriers • **Assist agencies** in working together on behalf of the high-needs youth identified above • Provide **direct support** for some of the youth where needed in the form of case coordination and navigation • Maintain specific connections IYS as this model is developed in Calgary & Area	Standard tracking of all identified inter-organizational barriers and how they were handled, use reflective practice processes to regularly debrief and adjust Measures of the collaborative process completed by agency reps at regular intervals Standard tracking of outcomes for the youth with new outcomes added along the way as issues of importance are identified Arms length interviews with providers at 2-3 intervals followed by reflective practice processes
Program Development and Evaluation*	• Co-develop **service charter/principles** that cross all types of transitions and types of youth with the core agencies and youth advisors; • Co-develop/select **common program tools** such as a transition readiness scale, a standard transition planning tool, outcome measures such as functioning (provider-rated) and quality of life (client-rated), youth empowerment scale, possibly Fidelity scales for best YTA practice with self-assessment processes etc. • Co-develop **cross-agency tools** such as service maps and/or service pathways	Collect feedback on content and process of developed tools Flexible implementation, feedback and refinement

	• Co-design a **developmental evaluation process** with the core agencies and youth advisors • Offer agencies assistance with evaluation processes and measures • Recognition/celebration of best practices:	
Information and Resources Brokering	• Assemble a set of **resources and tools**, including common listing of services for youth, sets of related resources for youth, parents and providers • **Provide phone consultation to providers on resources** in and beyond the core services • Provide **phone consultation, support and referral for parents** where core agencies have identified that extra assistance may be needed	Track use indicators for resources and both formal and informal feedback on utility and appropriateness of resources and additional needs; potentially cognitive testing of some materials Document episodes of use quantitatively Document episodes of use qualitatively
Outreach	• Identify youth with disabilities/vulnerabilities that are **not currently being served** and connect them to services	TBD (given this part will likely not be feasible)
Youth and Parent Engagement (Overarches all functions above)	• Set up a small group of **Youth Advisors** made up of youth with disabilities and/or vulnerabilities from the core agencies including slightly older youth who have overcome transition barriers and collect their feedback on all of the above • Set up a small group of **Parent Advisors** made up of parents who have overcome transition barriers on behalf of their children and collect their feedback on all of the above	Document the process of involvement of youth and parents in various activities – using stories and quick vignettes; arms-length interviews with parents and youth at 2-3 intervals throughout the evaluation period followed by reflective practice processes

NOTE: Further suggestions can be made once the core functions for the position are finalized by the WG.